

Swarming Ants.—On June 5, 1975 while travelling from Mandurah to Fremantle I drove through swarms of flying ants for approximately 12 km. The insects were so thick that their remains blocked the radiator of the car causing it to overheat and their mangled bodies, on the windscreen, made it extremely difficult to see. It was obvious that other vehicles and their drivers were in a similar predicament.

Another flight was recorded by Mr. Lloyd Pond, Principal, Claremont Teachers' College, who drove through a swarm on April 26, 1975 from the 95 km peg north for 26 km on the Albany Highway. He too had problems of poor visibility and an overheating vehicle.

The ants, winged males and females, were taking part in a nuptial flight. Specimens collected were identified by Mr. Athol Douglas, Western Australian Museum, as *Aphaenogaster barbigula* Wheeler.

The swarms encountered between Mandurah and Fremantle were being actively predated by great numbers of Silver Gulls, *Larus novaehollandiae*.

On each occasion the weather was hot and sultry and rain fell within 12 hours of the sightings.

—PETER McMILLAN, Honorary Associate, Entomology Department,
Western Australian Museum.

The Biology and Burrow of a Salt Lake Wolf Spider, *Lycosa salifodina* McKay.—Recently McKay (1976, *Mem. Qd. Mus.*, 17(3): 417-23) described the new species of wolf spider *Lycosa salifodina* from specimens collected by Mr. A. M. Douglas and myself at Lake Lefroy, near Widgiemooltha, W.A. The present article gives information (especially about the burrows) that is additional to the few notes given with the description. The existence of this spider had long been known, e.g., Athol Douglas says it had been pointed out to him in the early 1930s by the coleopterist, Horace Brown.

The area worked by Athol Douglas and me was roughly a kilometre square. The specimens were collected in January when the surface of the salt lake was dry. The larger spiders occurred at about 90 m from the shore, the smaller towards the middle of the lake. The spiders were collected at night when they were easy to locate because their shiny eyes reflected the beams of our head torches as a white glow. The sample collected was found to comprise eight mature females, two mature males, and 22 juveniles. The specimens had been collected at random with regard to sex, but with a bias towards larger sized individuals.

Rolly McKay has figured the burrow as a simple vertical tube some 15 cm deep with a distinct rounded ending. However, my field records show that the largest burrows extended vertically into the salt for 15 to 20 cm, whence there extended at right angles a side tunnel for 6.5 cm. The main tube then continued obliquely downwards to the underground water (about 45 cm deep). Burrow entrances were mostly up to 1.6 cm in diameter; the largest was 3.0 cm. Some of the burrows had a small amount of very flimsy silk across the width of the burrow at about 1.3 cm below ground level.

Every spider was astride the top of the burrow: the third pair of legs was positioned at right angles to the body, and all the legs were spread wide across the entrance of the burrow. These spiders, especially the larger individuals, were very aggressive. The only insects abundant on the salt lake were the large green predaceous tiger beetles of the genus *Megacephala*. On various occasions, Athol Douglas has dug up the spiders' burrows in random searches for the remains of this beetle, or other possible prey, but found none.

—L. E. KOCH, Western Australian Museum.